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AGRICULTURE • ECONOMICS

From USDA's Economic Research Service

Fall 1988



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Deciding Agricultural Policy

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- ☐ **Farming-Dependent Counties and the Financial Well-Being of Farm Operator Households.** Describes the general characteristics of areas that differ by their dependence on farming as an economic base and examines the financial conditions of farms in those areas.
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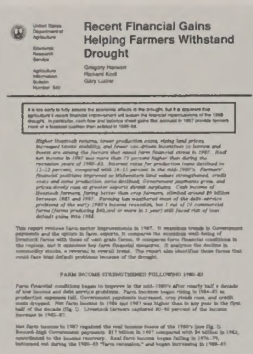
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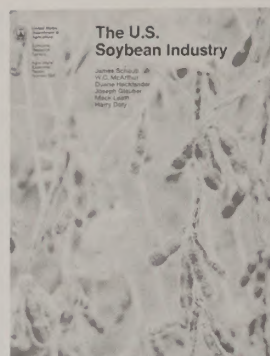
The Nonmetro Elderly: Economic and Demographic Status, by Nina Glasgow. RDRR-70. 35 pp. June 1988. \$2.00.

A disproportionate share of the U.S. elderly population lives in nonmetro areas and has substantially more poverty than the metro elderly. The nonmetro elderly's poverty rate was 21 percent in 1980 versus 13 percent for metro elderly, while median incomes were \$4,111 versus \$5,003. Suggests the need for increased long-term care, welfare, and local planning to meet the elderly's needs in rural areas.



Recent Financial Gains Helping Farmers Withstand Drought, by Gregory Hanson, Richard Kodl, and Gary Lucier. AIB-543. August 1988. 12 pp. \$1.00.

Reviews key farm financial indicators, examines trends in Government payments and the upturn in farm exports, and compares the economic well-being of livestock farms with those of cash grain farms. Rebounding livestock returns, lower production costs, recently rising land prices, increased lender stability, and fewer tax-driven incentives to borrow and invest are among the factors that eased farm financial stress in 1987, and are helping some farmers affected by the drought.



The U.S. Soybean Industry, by James Schaub, W.C. McArthur, Duane Hacklander, Joseph Glauber, Mack Leath, and Harry Doty. AER-588. May 1988. 51 pp. \$2.75.

U.S. soybean production has increased sevenfold since 1950, making soybeans the second highest valued crop after corn. This report describes the U.S. soybean industry from producers to consumers and provides a single source of economic and statistical information on soybeans.



How the Dollar's Value Affects U.S. Farm Exports to Developing Countries, by Mary E. Burfisher. FAER-237. July 1988. 20 pp. \$1.50.

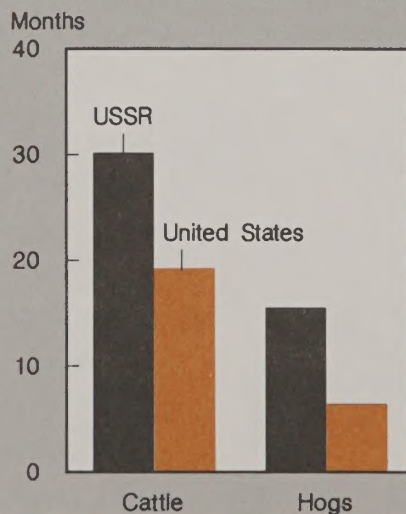
U.S. exports may not necessarily increase when the dollar falls on the world market. This finding conflicts with conventional thinking that a weaker dollar means more demand for U.S. products because they become less expensive than goods from countries with stronger currencies. This report measures the effects of changes in currency exchange rates from 1980 to early 1987 on the import-buying power of 14 developing countries.

The Soviet Livestock Sector: Performance and Prospects, by Edward C. Cook. FAER-235. 33 pp. June 1988. \$1.75.

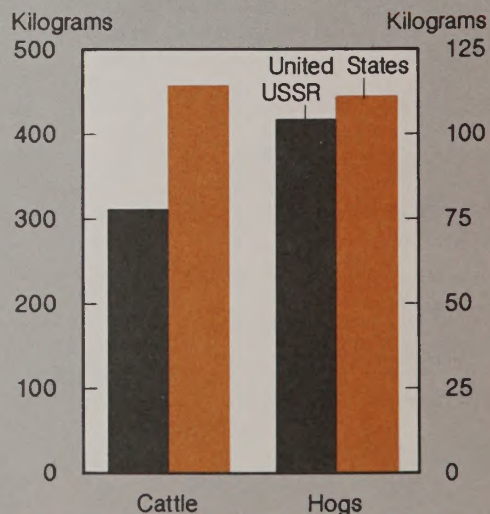
Increases in USSR livestock production exceeded population growth during 1965-85, but production did not keep pace with growth in consumer demand. This report analyzes Soviet attempts to modernize livestock production since 1965 and the results and costs of those attempts. The Soviet Union should maintain the 1983-87 livestock production growth rate (nearly 3 percent per year) into the 1990's. Costs of production are expected to continue increasing, but at a slower rate than in the 1970's.

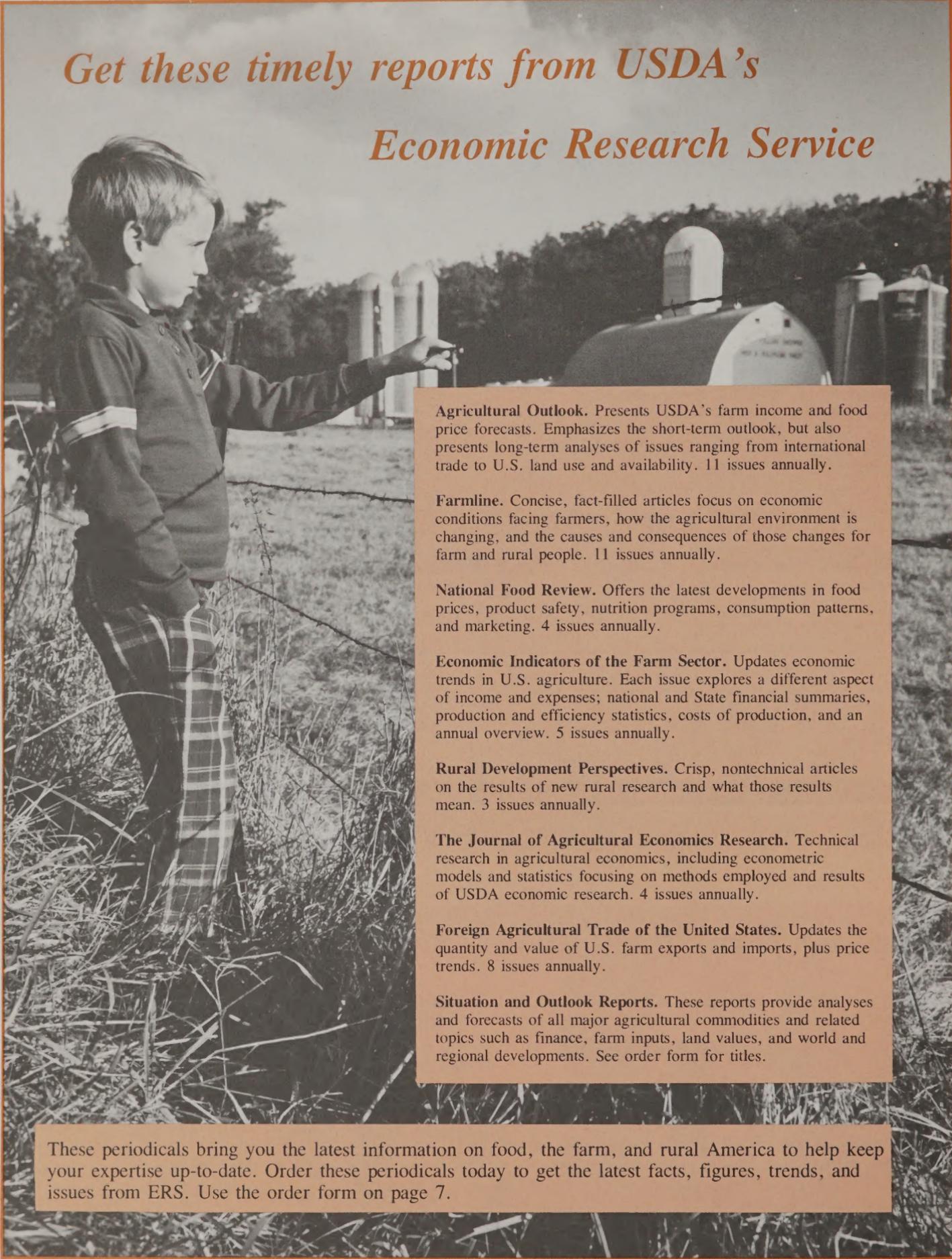
In 1984, it took longer to raise livestock in the USSR, and average cattle slaughter weights were lower

Average birth-to-slaughter times, 1984



Average slaughter weights, 1984





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